

Claims

[c1] A system of incoming mail receptacles for detecting hazards in a mail piece and notifying users including senders and recipients having quarantined mail comprising:
a plurality of incoming mail receptacles each including a hazard detector for triggering a mail piece quarantine system for the mailbox, an image scanner for scanning the face of a mail piece, a communications system, and a scan detection system for providing source and recipient information for quarantined mail pieces;
a server connected to the plurality of incoming mail receptacles for receiving scan detection data and determining a notification method and for communicating the notification to the sender and the recipient.

[c2] The system of claim 1 further comprising:
a secure internet connection between each incoming mail receptacle and the server.

[c3] A method for communicating a quarantine condition to users including senders and recipients of a mail system having a plurality of incoming mail receptacles with hazard detection systems connected to a central server comprising:
detecting the presence of a mail piece;
detecting sender and recipient information from a mail piece;
testing the mail piece for hazards;
alerting the central server upon detection of a hazard and providing source information to the central server;
determining a notification method;
notifying at least one user of the mail piece quarantine.

[c4] The system of claim 3 wherein the source detection includes detecting a destination address.

[c5] The system of claim 3 wherein the source detection includes detecting a return address.

[c6] The system of claim 3 wherein the determination of a notification method

comprises determining if a valid email address is available for the user.

- [c7] The system of claim 3 wherein the determination of a notification method comprises determining if a valid telephone number is available for the user.
- [c8] The system of claim 3 wherein the determination of a notification method comprises determining if the envelope address is a valid postal address for the user.